10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a [609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 814 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth" [845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their
611 use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family' or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 263f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies without the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain.

[115]

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 229f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan[788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [781] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [193] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en[787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records. My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are afraid, offend and alienate some of our Inis Beag friends, for whom we hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales 1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history, literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies.